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THE MEANING OF THE VOTES.

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NOTHING is more unprofitable than the "might have beens" of history or politics. The computations by which it is shown that, if a few thousand votes had been changed in one place and a few thousand more somewhere else, then the result of the Presidential election would have been different, are not only meaningless but harmful. The single statement that it is no easier but actually more difficult to change votes when the margin is narrow and political lines tightly drawn than when the margin is wide and party ties loose really disposes of the whole thing. They are harmful because they are able by a certain fallacious picturesqueness to disturb and agitate many people who do not stop to analyze them. This calculation and solemn setting forth of practically impossible hypotheses is a favorite amusement after elections. It was indulged in in 1892, and has had its run again in 1896. But these computations and imaginings are not worth a moment's serious thought nor the paper used to print them.

But while the "might have beens" are flat and unprofitable, it is both useful and profitable to examine the actual facts disclosed by the votes after a national election and especially after an election as momentous as that through which we have just passed. Such an examination seems especially desirable at this time, when many persons who in October would have found complete joy and salvation in the election of McKinley by a majority of one

electoral vote are now grumbling and shaking their heads because he did not have a hundred and fifty. Such utterances and such a state of mind are especially undesirable now when the business confidence, for which at last we have good ground, should be stimulated and not checked and depressed.

My purpose here, therefore, is to sketch briefly the situation which led up to the political campaign just concluded, and then by a few simple tables to show what the votes which decided that campaign really meant and what they represented. The elections of 1893, 1894, and 1895 were fought exclusively upon the tariff, and their overwhelmingly Republican results made it obvious that the people were not only convinced that the Democrats were a failure in office, but that they were also against low tariffs and in favor of protection. When a party elected to power on a distinct declaration in favor of free trade found itself unable to frame or pass anything but a tariff protective in principle, it became clear that the vast majority of the American people adhered to protection. This was confirmed by the election results of three successive years. The voters clearly did not want free trade, and were sick of the attempts made in that direction under the guise of tariff reform. Thus it became plain to everybody, except to those few persons whose horizon was so small that it was completely filled by the figure of Mr. Cleveland, that on the tariff issue the party of protection would carry the country, and win a sweeping victory. In the question of free silver some of the Southern Democratic leaders saw a means of escape, not only from national defeat, but what was far more important to them, from the loss of their own States to the Populists. In the election of 1892, Mr. Cleveland, although he had a plurality of nearly 400,000, was in a minority on the total popular vote of close on to a million. If by free silver the Populists could be united to the Democrats, victory was certainly possible if not probable.

The plan of these leaders was to confine the campaign to the silver issue, but when they got to Chicago they found it was easier to light a fire than to control it. They had broken down the old leadership of the Democratic party in the North and a new element had come in. This new element cared little for the silver question except as a means to an end. What they desired was to make a general attack on all existing institutions. Under

the able lead of Governor Altgeld they embodied in the platform a demand for repudiation, for the overthrow of the powers of the Court, for making the courts a mere mouthpiece of the victorious political party, and for the destruction of the Executive power of enforcing law. When this platform was first published, these clauses struck the country as merely wild declarations put forward without consideration in the hope of catching certain bodies of voters. But, as the campaign proceeded, it became clear to every one that, instead of being a collection of reckless and crazy utterances without cohesion or plan, it was a well-drawn and carefully thought out scheme based on socialistic and anarchistic theories imported from Europe and involving, if successful, nothing short of a revolution in our form of government.

As the discussion went on and the weeks passed, the silver question dropped more and more into the background. The theatrical declaimer who won the nomination by arresting at a critical moment the wandering fancy of the Convention first dropped from his repertoire the question of the tariff. Four years before he had been proclaiming to all who would listen that free trade would bring the millennium and the overthrow of all those wicked persons and combinations engaged in the criminal pursuit of earning and saving money. In 1896 he had forgotten the panacea of 1892. In all his miles of talk and acres of words there is hardly an allusion to tariff. At the beginning his speeches were devoted almost exclusively to the money question. He even tried at Madison Square to discuss it seriously and he never wholly abandoned it, but gradually it assumed a less and less important place in his declamation. More and more he was impelled by the forces which had put the revolutionary clauses into the Democratic platform to devote himself to passionate appeals along these lines. His action, which was the result not of thought but of the governing forces of the contests, illustrates the single point I desire to make, which is that the real question finally developed during the campaign was whether we should hold to the principles of government and the traditions of law and order which have been characteristic of the American people, or whether we should break down all these principles and traditions and enter upon a new line of experiment and probably of revolution. No graver question was ever submitted to any people for decision at the ballot box at a single election. The result of

the voting therefore becomes of the utmost importance, and its true significance should be rightly understood so that we may know what it means and what it portends in the future.

Let us note, first, exactly what the result of the voting was on the popular vote, which is much more instructive than the electoral vote, and see how it compares with the previous elections. The following table gives these statistics:

TABLE I.
POPULAR MAJORITY AND PLURALITY OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

Year.	Candidates.	Popular vote.	Plurality.	Majority.	Minority.
1828	Andrew Jackson	647,231	138,134	138,134	.....
"	J. Q. Adams	509,097	.....	.....	.....
1832	Andrew Jackson	687,502	157,313	124,305	.....
"	Henry Clay	530,189	.....	.....	.....
1836	Martin Van Buren	761,549	24,893	24,893	.....
"	W. H. Harrison	736,656	.....	.....	.....
1840	W. H. Harrison	1,275,017	146,315	139,256	.....
"	Martin Van Buren	1,128,702	.....	.....	.....
1844	Jas. K. Polk	1,337,243	38,175	.....	24,125
"	Henry Clay	1,299,668	.....	.....	.....
1848	Zachary Taylor	1,360,101	139,557	.....	151,706
"	Lewis Cass	1,220,544	.....	.....	.....
1852	Franklin Pierce	1,601,474	220,896	64,749	.....
"	Winfield Scott	1,380,576	.....	.....	.....
1856	James Buchanan ..	1,338,169	496,905	.....	377,633
"	Jno. C. Fremont	1,341,264	.....	.....	.....
1860	Abraham Lincoln	1,866,352	491,195	.....	944,149
"	Stephen A. Douglas ..	1,375,157	.....	.....	.....
1864	Abraham Lincoln	2,216,067	407,342	407,342	.....
"	Geo. B. McClellan	1,808,725	.....	.....	.....
1868	U. S. Grant	3,015,071	305,456	305,456	.....
"	Horatio Seymour	2,709,615	.....	.....	.....
1872	U. S. Grant	3,597,070	762,991	627,975	.....
"	Horace Greeley	2,834,079	.....	.....	.....
1876	S. J. Tilden	4,284,885	250,935	157,037	.....
"	R. B. Hayes	4,033,950	.....	.....	.....
1880	J. A. Garfield	4,449,053	7,018	.....	311,300
"	W. S. Hancock	4,442,035	.....	.....	.....
1884	G. Cleveland	4,911,017	62,683	.....	222,951
"	J. G. Blaine	4,848,334	.....	.....	.....
1888	G. Cleveland	5,538,233	98,017	.....	300,394
"	Benj. Harrison	5,440,216	.....	.....	.....
1892	G. Cleveland	5,556,918	380,810	.....	945,515
"	B. Harrison	5,176,108	.....	.....	.....
1896	W. McKinley	7,065,410	725,448	380,059	.....
"	W. J. Bryan	6,339,962	.....	.....	.....

It will be observed from this table, which is made up of official returns in all except two or three of the smaller States, that McKinley received the largest plurality and the largest majority over all ever given to a President except in 1872, when Grant defeated Greeley.

It must be remembered that in the latter case the Republican vote of the South was still polled, and that the Democratic vote

did not come out. The Democratic voters abandoned their candidate, so that that election is hardly a fair test, as it was not at the end seriously contested.

The magnitude of McKinley's victory is thus shown, and it is thrown into still stronger relief if we consider the number of Presidents who have been in a minority of the popular vote, and especially when we recall that Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and Cleveland in 1892 were in a minority of nearly a million, and yet we know how decisive both those elections were at the time.

I now give a series of tables showing the illiteracy, wealth, population, and proportion of foreign-born population in the States voting for McKinley and Bryan.

TABLE II.

PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERACY AND OF FOREIGN BORN, AND WEALTH AND POPULATION OF M'KINLEY STATES.

State.	Percent- age of illiter- acy.	Percent- age of foreign born.	Population.	Wealth.
California.....	7.7	50.21	1,220,000	\$2,533,733,627
Connecticut.....	5.3	34.99	800,000	855,120,219
Delaware.....	14.3	12.94	179,700	175,678,795
Illinois.....	5.2	36.39	4,500,000	5,066,751,719
Indiana.....	6.3	12.33	3,135,360	2,095,176,626
Iowa.....	3.6	29.92	2,001,000	2,287,348,353
Kentucky.....	21.6	6.61	2,200,000	1,172,232,313
Maine.....	5.5	15.14	732,000	489,184,128
Maryland.....	15.7	15.73	1,138,348	1,085,473,048
Massachusetts.....	6.2	38.66	2,495,345	2,803,645,447
Michigan.....	5.9	40.22	2,297,000	2,095,016,272
Minnesota.....	6.0	58.85	1,610,000	1,691,851,927
New Hampshire....	6.8	22.05	400,000	325,128,740
New Jersey.....	6.5	35.08	1,672,942	1,445,285,114
New York.....	5.5	38.73	6,690,842	8,576,701,991
North Dakota.....	6.0	64.89	225,000	337,006,506
Ohio.....	5.2	21.53	4,000,000	3,951,382,384
Oregon.....	4.1	33.48	400,000	590,396,194
Pennsylvania.....	6.8	27.19	5,760,128	6,190,746,550
Rhode Island.....	9.3	40.18	384,758	504,162,352
Vermont.....	6.7	19.36	340,000	265,567,323
West Virginia.....	14.4	5.40	875,000	438,954,881
Wisconsin.....	6.7	52.93	1,937,915	1,833,308,523
23 States.....	Av., 7.90	Av., 30.99	Total, 44,994,338	Total, \$46,739,803,012

The statistics on population are estimates made from the *World Almanac* by the Governors of the States.

PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERACY AND OF FOREIGN BORN, AND WEALTH AND
POPULATION OF BRYAN STATES.

State.	Percent- age of illiter- acy.	Percent- age of foreign born.	Population.	Wealth.
Alabama.....	41.0	2.50	1,600,000	\$622,773,504
Arkansas.....	26.6	3.20	1,600,000	455,147,422
Colorado.....	5.2	30.52	450,000	1,145,712,267
Florida.....	27.8	11.70	485,000	389,489,388
Georgia.....	39.8	1.75	1,984,939	852,409,449
Idaho.....	5.1	37.17	130,000	207,896,531
Kansas.....	4.0	19.07	1,350,000	1,799,343,501
Louisiana.....	45.8	10.12	1,225,000	495,301,597
Mississippi.....	40.0	1.86	1,351,850	454,242,688
Missouri	9.1	17.11	3,200,000	2,397,902,945
Montana.....	5.5	45.82	185,000	453,135,209
Nebraska.....	3.1	31.80	1,158,000	1,275,685,514
Nevada.....	12.8	51.41	60,000	.....
North Carolina....	35.7	0.61	1,720,000	584,143,999
South Carolina....	45.0	1.45	1,375,000	400,911,303
South Dakota.....	4.2	44.35	332,000	425,141,299
Tennessee.....	26.6	2.74	1,800,000	887,956,143
Texas.....	19.7	14.04	2,838,263	2,105,576,766
Utah.....	5.6	45.02	254,743	349,411,294
Virginia.....	30.2	2.99	1,750,000	862,318,070
Washington.....	4.3	39.44	415,000	760,698,726
Wyoming.....	3.7	33.99	100,000	169,773,710
Av., 20.03	Av., 20.39	Total, 25,364,795	Total, \$17,094,976,325	

The statistics on population are estimates made from the *World Almanac* by the Governors of the States.

Population of McKinley States.....	44,994,338
" " Bryan " 	25,364,795

Balance in favor of McKinley.....	19,629,543
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Wealth of McKinley States.....	\$46,789,803,012
" " Bryan " (excluding Nevada).....	17,094,976,325

Balance in favor of McKinley.....	\$29,694,826,687
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FOREIGN PARENTAGE.

No percentage by States of persons born of foreign parentage, but in 1890 the number was 20,676,046, being 33.02 per cent. of the population. The percentage in 1880 was 29.75, and in 1870 was 28.25. Total number of foreign born and born of foreign parentage, 29,925,593. Total number of native born and born of native parentage, 32,696,657.

These tables suggest some important and interesting deductions. They show that where the McKinley vote cast against the revolutionary programme was heaviest was in the States where the average of illiteracy was lowest. In other words, they demonstrate that

the public schools not only teach people how to vote intelligently, but also rightly, on fundamental questions and imbue them with the strongest American sentiment. The second table gives also the wealth and population of the various States arranged according to their electoral votes. By them it appears that the population of the McKinley States, in round numbers, was close to forty-five million, while the population of the Bryan States is only a little over twenty-five million.

We find also from these tables that the wealth of the States which gave their electoral votes to the Republican candidate, according to the census of 1890, was close to forty-seven billion, while that of the States which gave their votes to the Democratic candidate was, according to the same census, just over seventeen billion.

The figures giving the percentage of foreign born show that that percentage was largest in the McKinley States. This indicates, in the first place, that a majority of the foreign-born citizens take a conservative view of the currency question. But it indicates something which is more important than this with reference to that which I have said was the main point decided at the election.

The great bulk of the electoral vote of Mr. Bryan came from the Southern States. The voters of those States are chiefly small planters and farmers. It is neither an industrial region nor one of large cities.

Now the planter and the farmer are freeholders and a small freeholder is by nature, and at bottom he can never be otherwise than, conservative; that is, the owner of land whether large or small is not a man who is in favor of the destruction or division of property or of anarchy or disorder. If the issue should be squarely made, he would be found in opposition to the destructive principles of Altgeld and those whom he represented. The Southern planter and farmer, of course, found himself in combination with these elements of the great Northern States merely because he was carried away by the free-silver propaganda. The same is true of the farmers of the West who voted for Bryan. They were for free silver. In a vague way they may have been opposed to railroads and corporations, but they had and can have no genuine sympathy with the general overturn of laws and institutions which the Chicago platform proposed. It is clear also

that if those disintegrating and revolutionary principles were to find strength anywhere, they would be likely to find it among our foreign-born citizens, because the Altgeld policies were imported and not native. Yet the votes of the States show that the majority of our foreign-born citizens voted decisively against the revolutionary sentiments of the Chicago platform. If those doctrines can be beaten in our great cities, if the majority of the foreign-born citizens are as strongly against them as the native-born, they are not likely to flourish anywhere. They certainly can take no hold among the farmers, planters, and freeholders of the South and West.

This analysis shows, too, how unreal the combination was which enabled Bryan to get as many votes as he did, and that it was made up of men who, in their deepest convictions, were as wide apart as the poles, but who in a period of agitation and bad times were united by the skill of certain desperate leaders on a single misleading issue relating to the currency.

The next and last table which I shall give shows the dates at which the various States were admitted to the Union, and the candidate to whom they gave their electoral vote in the November election.

TABLE III.

AGE OF STATES VOTING FOR MCKINLEY.

State.	Year admitted.	Age.
Delaware.....	1787	110 years
Pennsylvania.....	1787	110 "
New Jersey.....	1787	110 "
Connecticut.....	1788	109 "
Massachusetts.....	1788	109 "
Maryland.....	1788	109 "
New Hampshire.....	1788	109 "
New York.....	1788	109 "
Rhode Island.....	1790	107 "
Vermont.....	1791	106 "
Kentucky.....	1792	105 "
Ohio.....	1802	95 "
Indiana.....	1816	81 "
Illinois.....	1818	79 "
Maine.....	1820	77 "
Michigan.....	1837	60 "
Iowa.....	1846	51 "
Wisconsin.....	1848	49 "
California.....	1850	47 "
Minnesota.....	1858	39 "
Oregon.....	1859	38 "
West Virginia.....	1863	34 "
North Dakota.....	1889	8 "

Average age of McKinley States, 80.4 years.

AGE OF STATES VOTING FOR BRYAN.

State.	Year admitted.	Age.
Georgia	1788	109 years
South Carolina	1788	109 "
Virginia	1788	109 "
North Carolina	1789	108 "
Tennessee	1796	101 "
Louisiana	1812	85 "
Mississippi	1817	80 "
Alabama	1819	78 "
Missouri	1821	76 "
Arkansas	1836	61 "
Florida	1845	52 "
Texas	1845	52 "
Kansas	1861	36 "
Nevada	1864	33 "
Nebraska	1867	30 "
Colorado	1876	21 "
South Dakota	1889	8 "
Montana	1889	8 "
Washington	1889	8 "
Idaho	1890	7 "
Wyoming	1890	7 "
Utah	1895	2 "
Average age of Bryan States, 53.6 years		

This table, when we consider it, is a very interesting one. It shows that McKinley carried nine of the thirteen original States, and of the other four North Carolina was so divided that its vote has little significance. Going beyond the borders of the thirteen original States, we find that, outside the South, where the voters were held in line merely by party discipline and the strength of the party label, McKinley carried the States just about in proportion to their age as States. From this we see that the older and more settled our States become, the heavier and more decisive is their verdict against dishonest policies and disorganizing and revolutionary principles of government.

If we sum up the whole matter, as disclosed by these tables, we find that the oldest and thriftiest, the richest, the best-educated and the most populous communities in the United States were those where the theories of Altgeld met with their heaviest defeat, going down in some cases under majorities that were little short of phenomenal. It would not be easy to find a better proof of the strong and patriotic character of the American people, or a better guarantee of American institutions than this.

Then again, if we analyze the Bryan vote, we find that his Western States and his Southern States were held to him by the free-silver doctrine, in the one case because it seemed to promise benefit to a local industry, in the other because the old and re-

current delusion, as old as human history, that times can be made better by an abundance of cheap money, had taken hold of the people. It is mere conjecture to say how much of the large vote he received was held to him by the fact that he was the regular candidate of the Democratic party. In New England I have no question that nine-tenths of his vote at least was merely for the label—that is, it came from men who would have voted the Democratic ticket last November if it had declared in favor of gold or if it had declared in favor of putty dollars. On the naked question without the forces of the party organization behind it, Mr. Bryan on the platform which Mr. Altgeld prepared for him would hardly have polled in New England a vote sufficient to have risen above the dignity of the scattering. What I feel certain is true of New England I believe to be true of the rest of the country. Therefore we may not only feel encouraged by the result of the election, but we are warranted in believing more firmly than ever in the character and intelligence of the American people when a great moral issue is squarely presented to them.

I should not for a moment deny, despite the confident view which I think an intelligent study of the statistics warrants, that there were some deplorable and alarming events in the last campaign, but I do not find them in the results of the voting. The great misfortune of the campaign was the capture of the Democratic party, one of the two great parties of the country, by the men who seized upon its name and authority in Chicago. In two strong, well-organized parties lies one of the sources of the success and strength of representative government among the English-speaking people. Great parties are responsible organizations. In the end they are conservative, and tend to maintain the principles on which the government has been founded, and by which the race has prospered. They constitute one of our great points of superiority to the Latin races, who, in their representative governments, do not have two great parties, one of government and one of opposition, but only a collection of groups and factions. From this fact has arisen a large proportion of the troubles which have beset the non-English speaking races in their efforts to carry on representative government. Hence it is that the capture of a great party organization by such elements as prevailed at Chicago is a national misfortune. We have but to look at the next Senate

to see as one of these results that the Republican party is not confronted by a coherent opposition, but by a body of Senators split up into no less than four groups. This is a danger, and every patriotic man must hope that the Democratic party will shake off the unnatural and incompetent leadership into whose hands it has fallen and to return to its old principles under which it has flourished for so long.

The other unfortunate event was the fact that the Southern leaders succeeded again in dragging most of their States into a position where a majority of the people of the country identify them with a revolutionary movement and with hostility to the business and prosperity of the nation. The South has suffered heavily and paid bitterly for bad leadership and mistaken policies in the past. No matter on which side of politics they array themselves it is profoundly to be hoped that the new and progressive elements in the Southern States will lift them out of the false position into which the old leadership has been continually thrusting them.

Yet with all allowances for these two very serious aspects, the result of the election looked at dispassionately cannot but give an American an increased pride in the good sense and high character of his countrymen. We have been brought to a test nearly, if not quite, as momentous as the Civil War and far more insidious. We have met it victoriously and we may well feel confident in the future of such a people and such a country and bend all our energies to the development and renewal of that prosperity before which the last traces of the late campaign, to which hard times alone gave vitality, will melt away.

HENRY CABOT LODGE.